

The invention claimed is:

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A food coating composition for imparting increased surface crispness and holding time to coated food substrates which are cooked with the coating applied, comprising:

a mix of ingredients including a rice component and a dextrin component together comprising from about 25% to about 70% by weight of the solids content of said ingredient mix.

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The food coating composition of claim 1, wherein said rice component comprises up to about 30% by weight of the solids content of said mix.

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The food coating composition of claim 2, wherein said rice component includes at least one of a short-grain rice flour, a medium-grain rice flour, a long-grain rice flour, and derivatives of said rice flour.

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The food coating composition of claim 1, wherein said dextrin component comprises up to about 30% by weight of the solids content of said mix.

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The food coating composition of claim 4, wherein said dextrin component is a member selected from the group consisting of corn dextrin, tapioca dextrin, potato dextrin, and derivatives thereof.

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The food coating composition of claim 5, wherein said dextrin component is a high-solubility dextrin.

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The food coating composition of claim 5, wherein said dextrin component is a low-solubility dextrin.

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The food coating composition of claim 1, wherein said rice component is present within said mix in a ratio to said dextrin component of from about 1:1 to about 5:1.

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The food coating composition of Claim 8, wherein said ratio of said rice component to said dextrin component is from about 2:1 to about 3.5:1.

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The food coating composition of claim 1, wherein said ingredient mix further includes an adherent.

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The food coating composition of claim 10, wherein said adherent comprises a potato starch component.

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The food coating composition of claim 11, wherein said potato starch component comprises a modified ungelatinized low-amylose content potato starch.

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The food coating composition of claim 11, wherein said potato starch component comprises up to about 50% by weight of said ingredient mix.

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The food coating composition of claim 13, wherein said potato starch component comprises from about 25% to about 45% of said mix.

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The food coating composition of claim 1, further including at least about 1% or greater of at least one leavening agent.

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The food coating composition of claim 15, wherein said leavening agent is a member selected from the group consisting of an edible acid, an edible carbonate, derivatives thereof, and combinations thereof.

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The food coating composition of claim 16, wherein said leavening agent is a combination of sodium acid pyrophosphate and sodium bicarbonate.

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The food coating composition of claim 1, further including at least about 1% or greater of at least one sweetening ingredient component.

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The food coating composition of claim 18, wherein said sweetening ingredient component is sugar.

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The food coating composition of claim 1, further including at least about 0.1% or greater of at least one stabilizing agent.

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The food coating composition of claim 20, wherein said stabilizing agent is a member selected from the group consisting of a cellulose ether, a natural gum, an alginate, a polyalcohol, a water-soluble polymer, derivatives thereof, and combinations thereof.

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The food coating composition of claim 21, wherein said stabilizing agent is methylcellulose.

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The food coating composition of claim 21, wherein said stabilizing agent is xanthan gum.

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The food coating composition of claim 1, further including at least about 0.1% or greater of at least one color agent component.

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The food coating composition of claim 24, wherein said color agent component is a member selected from the group consisting of corn syrup solids, sucrose, whey, derivatives thereof, and combinations thereof.

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The food coating composition of claim 1, further including at least about 1% or greater of a salt component or derivative thereof.

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The food coating composition of claim 1, further including a sufficient quantity of water mixed with said ingredients to form a slurry.

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The food coating composition of claim 27, wherein said quantity of water comprises a coating composition about 32% to 44% of said slurry.

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A method of achieving increased surface crispness and holding time of a food substrate, comprising the step of:

- 5     applying a coating composition to the food substrate prior to finish-cooking thereof which comprises a mix of ingredients that includes a rice component and a dextrin component which together constitute from about 25% to about 70% by weight of the solids content of said mix of ingredients and thereafter finish-cooking the coated food substrate.

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The method of claim 29, further including the step of combining said mix of ingredients with a sufficient quantity of water to form a slurry, and applying said coating composition to said food substrate as a slurry.

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The method of claim 29, further including the steps of precooking and freezing said food substrate after coating it with said coating composition, and subsequently reconstituting the pre-cooked, coated, and frozen food substrate by using at least one of a gradient heat source, microwave, or fryer.

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The method of claim 29, further including the step of conditioning the food substrate by contacting it with a predetermined liquid prior to coating it with said composition.

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- 5     The method of claim 29, including the step of using a rice component in said coating composition which comprises up to about 30% by weight of the solids content of said ingredients, and using a rice flour as said rice component which is selected from the group consisting of a short-grain rice flour, a medium-grain rice flour, a long-grain rice flour, derivatives thereof, and combinations thereof.

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The method of claim 29, including the steps of using a dextrin component in said coating composition which comprises up to about 30% by weight of the solids content of said ingredients, and wherein said dextrin component is a member selected from the group consisting of corn dextrin, tapioca dextrin, potato dextrin, derivatives thereof, and combinations thereof.

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The method of claim 29, wherein said rice component is present in said mix in a ratio to said dextrin component of from about 1:1 to about 5:1.

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The method of claim 29, wherein said step of applying said coating composition further includes using a potato starch component as part of said coating composition which comprises up to about 50% by weight of the solids content of said ingredients, and selecting as said potato starch component a modified ungelatinized potato starch.

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The method of claim 29, wherein said step of applying said coating composition further includes using at least about 1% or greater by weight of at least one leavening agent in the composition, at least about 1% or greater of at least one sweetening component, at least about 1% or greater of at least one salt component, at least about 0.1% or greater of at least one stabilizing agent component, and at least about 0.1% or greater of at least one color agent component.

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The method of claim 29, wherein said coating composition is applied to said food substrate as a dry mix of ingredients.

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The method of claim 38, further including the step of freezing the dry-mix coated food substrates without first parfrying them.

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The method of claim 39, further including the step of finish cooking said coated food substrates after they have been frozen without parfrying.

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The method of claim 39, further including the steps of cooking the coated food substrates after they have been frozen, holding the cooked coated food substrates for up to about 45 minutes, and then reheating the held food substrates to serving temperature for consumption.

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The method of claim 41, wherein said step of holding the cooked food substrates is carried out at room temperature.

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The method of claim 41, wherein said step of holding the cooked food substrates is carried out under a heat source.

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The method of claim 38, wherein said coated food substrates are finish-cooked after coating and without freezing.

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The method of claim 44, further including the steps of holding the cooked coated food substrates for up to about 45 minutes, and the reheating the held food substrates to serving temperature for consumption.

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The method of claim 45, wherein said step of holding the cooked food substrates is carried out at room temperature.

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The method of claim 45, wherein said step of holding the cooked food substrates is carried out under a heat source.

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A method of increasing the crispness and holding time of a cooked potato substrate comprising the step of:

applying a water-dispersible slurry to the potato substrate whose solids content comprises about 25% to 70% by weight of a rice component and a dextrin component, to thereby coat the potato substrate, wherein said rice component and said dextrin component each comprise up to about 35% of said solids content, and wherein said rice component is in a ratio to said dextrin component of from about at least 1:1 to about 5:1.